

Name: _____

Class: _____

Thousand Splendid Suns Poem Analysis

A poet who was traveling between Persia and India wrote this poem in the 17th century. He wrote this poem when he returned to Persia because he wanted to create an expression of the beauty he saw in Kabul.

KABUL

(Translated by Dr. Josephine Davis)

Oh, the beautiful city of Kabul wears a rugged mountain skirt,
And the rose is jealous of its lash-like thorns.
The dust of Kabul's blowing soil smarts lightly in my eyes,
But I love her, for knowledge and love both come from her dust.

I sing bright praises to her colourful tulips,
The beauty of her trees makes me blush.
How sparkling the water flows from Pul-i-Mastaan!
May Allah protect such beauty from the evil eye of man!

Khizr chose Kabul to Paradise,
For her mountains brought him near to heaven's delights.
The fort's dragon-sprawling walls guard the city well,
Each brick is more precious than the treasure of Shayagan.

Every street in Kabul fascinates the eye.
In the bazaars, Egypt's caravans pass by.
No one can count the beauteous moons on her rooftops,
And hundreds of lovely suns¹ hide behind her walls.

Her morning's laugh is as gay as flowers,
Her dark nights shine like beautiful hair.
Her tuneful nightingales sing with flame in their notes,
Fiery songs like burning leaves, fall from their throats.

I sing to the gardens, Jahanara and Sharbara.
Even the Tuba of Paradise is Jealous of their greenery.

Saib-e-Tabrizi 17th Century

1. Who and what is the rose jealous of? This line contains an example of what poetic device?

2. Why *blush*? What makes people blush? What kinds of praises might the speaker be singing (metaphorical, of course)?

3. Explain the significance of the love the speaker feels for Kabul and the fact that the city hurts the speaker.

4. Find an example of where the poet mentions and extols something man-made. Think about this example. What is the example really referring to and how is it really used?

5. What kind of woman is Kabul?

¹ In an alternate translation, these words are translated as "a thousand splendid suns hide behind her walls;" it is this line that inspired Hosseini's novel

1. What do you learn about Kabul from reading this poem?

2. What is the most compelling image in this poem?

3. What is the poet's purpose? (What information is being conveyed?)

4. How does the poet succeed in creating a sense of the beauty of Kabul?
